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Email : cdgapublicaffairs@cdfa.ca.gov

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Contact: Jay Van Rein
CDFA
916-952-3586

Larry Hawkins
USDA
916-857-6243

Kathleen Thuner
San Diego County
Ag Commissioner
858-694-2739

MEXICAN FRUIT FLY QUARANTINE SET IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

SACRAMENTO- The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) have established a 117-square mile quarantine zone to prevent the spread of a Mexican fruit fly infestation in northern San Diego County. The quarantine zone goes as far north as the Riverside County line, to the east just outside the community of Pauma Valley, as far south as Mirar De Valley Road near the community of Valley Center, and to the west roughly along Interstate 15.

Products that are hosts for the Mexican fruit fly may not be shipped out of the quarantine zone unless they have been treated or processed, and are authorized by the county agricultural commissioner, USDA or CDFA. Residents and people moving through the affected zone may not move backyard fruits and vegetables from the area. The quarantine will remain in effect until eradication of the pest is officially declared, which is expected to take a number of months. Details of the eradication program will be announced soon.

“The Mexican fruit fly is a devastating pest that, left unchecked, can cause severe and permanent damage to California agriculture,” said CDFA Secretary William (Bill) J Lyons, Jr. “This quarantine is a necessary step, even though, as a farmer, I know the hardship that will be felt by many growers. I wish to thank them in advance for their cooperation. We pledge to eradicate this pest as quickly as possible.”

To date, 58 adult Mexican fruit flies have been trapped inside the quarantine zone, with larvae confirmed at six sites.

The Mexican fruit fly is native to southern and central Mexico. The fly attacks over 40 different kinds of fruits, including citrus and avocado. Damage occurs when the female fly lays eggs in the fruit. The eggs hatch into maggots which make the fruit unfit for human consumption.